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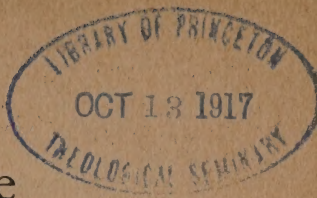

An Estimate of the Educational Work of Dr. ISAAC CONRAD KETLER

First President of Grove City College

By

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THE MAKING OF A UNIVERSITY

WHAT WE HAVE TO LEARN FROM EDUCATIONAL IDEALS IN AMERICA

BY

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PREFACE

THIS article was written in the spring of 1914, and is now printed as written, except the footnotes and some special sentences about the hero of the tale, which are added in January, 1915. The article was intended for English readers, and was about to appear in an influential daily newspaper in a series of parts; but the outbreak of the Great War relegated such topics to an upper shelf. Being written to explain to English readers the aspects of American education which are most useful for us to study, it is to some degree one-sided.

We have been trying a dangerous experiment, government by an uneducated democracy. A man who is not educated up to his capacity for receiving and profiting by education—which varies widely in different people—may be called uneducated, for society loses all the service that his higher education would have qualified him to perform. We trust order, conduct, work, and national defence to the voluntary choice of the individual man, but we do not give him the knowledge needed to choose wisely; and, if he chooses badly, the common reflection is that he is ruined by getting too much education.

It will do us no good merely to win the Great War in which Germany resolved to conquer us, unless we reform ourselves and re-model our education. That cannot be done by Act of Parliament: it can be done only by changing the heart of the people and training the teachers of the future.

The reason why we too often "muddle through," instead of going clean through, lies not in defect of character, but in lack of knowledge. In education we lay too exclusive stress on "how to learn," and too little on "what to learn". The Prussian system, on the other hand, has sacrificed to mere

material efficiency the highest side of education and the highest development of human character. The aim of this short study is, while pointing out the faults in both, to ask why we should not eliminate our defect and yet keep our excellence. The plan was conceived in America in 1913, and worked out for the press in 1914. All footnotes belong to 1915.

I do not try to philosophize about the character of good education or the faults of bad education. I tell the story how an American College was created by the faith and work of one man —not because American Colleges and Universities are by any means perfect, but because they make a nation believe in them and attend them and work boldly to improve them.

THE MAKING OF A UNIVERSITY

I

TWENTY years ago, travelling for the first time in some eastern districts of the United States, and visiting a number of the educational centres, I found the idea growing almost unconsciously in my mind that the future of the States lies in the Colleges and Universities. It is a true instinct that leads the people to turn so much attention on their educational institutions and give so much to them, as the future will show. I often expressed the wish that I might live to return fifty years later, when the Colleges had grown to their higher possibilities, concurrently with the general development of the educational system.

The Universities make the school teachers of the future ; and the schools will produce the College students, demanding more and more and doing more at the Universities, as the years pass. The growth of each part of the system reacts on all the rest.

The prime necessity is the teacher. Without a high order of teachers, inspired with ideals and actuated by sound and vigorous moral sense, neither Government Department and laws nor local Boards will be able to establish a good educational system. The order of teachers must first be made, and it

cannot be created in a year or a decade: it has to be evolved slowly by the entire educational system and the genius of the nation.

A Republic is the government of an educated people. An uneducated people can, at the best, only delegate the government to some individual, and then the republican form is a sham, worse in some ways than a straightforward despotism, for the cloaking of a despotism under the guise of democracy produces many evils. This great truth is felt in America. There the influx of such large numbers of totally uneducated workers, knowing nothing of freedom and often mistaking liberty for licensed lawlessness, has brought it home to all thinking Americans that the true University is the soul of true democracy. If, however, the Universities stood apart from the national life, and were too much like nurseries for advanced scholars, the people would not be so ready to support them.

Moreover, the Universities tend to be conducted in a religious spirit, some freer, some more strait-laced, but all with a deep-lying recognition of religious duty and of patriotic feeling; and America is deeply penetrated with a religious sense, which is more active and more widely diffused as a practical power than in Europe at present.

Four years ago it was my fortune, on a second visit to America, to make the acquaintance of and come into very friendly relations with a man who held much the same opinion as I have stated about

the importance of the Colleges in the future of the United States, and who was so possessed with this idea that he had staked his entire life and work on it, and was giving the whole of his abounding energy to the realization of this idea in creating a new University. The same idea is widely dominant in the States; but with him it was a passion determining his whole life, and guiding all his conduct and his plans. This man was Dr. Isaac Conrad Ketler.

In 1913 I went to pay a second visit to his College and himself on his urgent and repeated invitation. On the railway platform of the town where he lived we learned of his sudden death. "The zeal of his College had worn him out": he died of over-work; another name was applied to the final form which his illness took, but the real disease was seventeen hours a day, the rate of work mentioned in conversation as often reached by him. That is the same rate that was indicated by Mommsen to a student entering Berlin University, who asked the great historian for advice on his career, saying that he wished to be a scholar. "No young man," said Mommsen, as the story runs, "has any right to aim at a scholar's life unless he is prepared to work seventeen hours a day." The law is hard. Few people have Mommsen's marvellous constitution, physical health, and power of work; and yet if we take into account, as Mommsen certainly did, the time spent in meetings of societies

and University, it is remarkable what long hours many men at English Colleges work, and in some cases also how little is done after all. The work was not too hard for Mommsen. In 1885, when he spent a week in Oxford as my guest on his first visit to England, he said that he had never lost a day's work from illness; and he was then well over sixty. Some years later he wrote sadly that he had suffered from a severe attack of influenza and had lost much time. I have known no other person who could stand such continuous work as Mommsen, and maintain all the time his highest pitch of vitality. My American friend, Isaac Conrad Ketler, seemed to be working for years on his highest plane of activity; but quite suddenly he broke down, and it was found that he had exhausted his powers of resistance or recuperation.

The story of his achievement is so remarkable, and so characteristic of American life, that it seems worth our attention in Great Britain—not as a model to imitate, for that would be possible only under conditions totally unlike those which exist among us, but as a record of achievement, and as a measure of one kind of American educational machinery. His success must appear so incredible to European readers that I am almost afraid to tell the story, yet it is one of those truths that are too strange for a novel; one of the things that no one dare invent or could exaggerate. The saying which was often in Freeman's mouth when I knew him

in the last years of his life, *credo quia impossibile est*,[1] suits this story well. I know the facts. I spent a fortnight in the company of this man as a co-operator in his work, and afterwards three weeks as a guest; and I learned a good deal from him and from his friends about his ideals and his achievements. I was a witness of his sound practical sense and his indomitable energy in working out his dreams into a living educational institution. Finally, I spent several weeks in the College after his death.

No attempt is made here to describe his career, or to estimate his character, except in so far as these seem to bear directly on the educational problem. He stands before my memory as a typical American citizen of that West-Pennsylvanian country which has done so much in the development of the United States, and mainly because he expresses in his personality that immensely strong desire for education which is so widespread, if not actually universal, in the whole country, combined with the clear perception that the education should be systematized, and developed from an embryonic state by graduated steps in growth to a highly systematized and complex organization. He lived for his work, and would choose to be estimated and remembered by his work.

[1] Whether Freeman was only adapting Tertullian's *credo quia absurdum* to his own purpose at the moment, or was quoting from some other old Latinist, I cannot tell.

II

Circumstances imposed on him the method of development from a humble beginning; but this method should be defended as wise and right, and I am sure that he would have so defended it. The educative machine had to be adapted to the needs of the district. If it had been dumped down there with a full equipment in the highest style of University demands, and adapted only to students already well prepared by higher school training, it would have been ill suited to the region where it was placed, and it could have found no students, for none would come from distant parts to an unknown College, and the locality itself could as yet produce none.

The College had to be planted in the soil and then to grow. It had to live on the desire for education felt in a region, poor at first but increasing steadily in prosperity and eager to make an intelligent and honourable use of its accumulating wealth. The standard of knowledge and thought and aspiration and demands had to be elevated and guided throughout the whole community, and not merely among actual students. To make a body of students you must first of all get parents who value knowledge, who wish their children to be superior to themselves in education, and who have some vague, yet not unintelligent conception of what training should be sought for those children.

Without any financial resources to start from, the College of Isaac Conrad Ketler's dreams had to live on the feeling and the need of the country. The merit of the founder lay in his clear perception that the first steps must be regarded only as a beginning, that they could not justify themselves unless they led on to a higher standard of education by steady progress, and that the steps could not be really progressive, unless they were guided from the start by a lofty ideal of University work.

It was in the nobility and boldness of his educational ideal that Ketler's supreme merit lay. He was never for an hour satisfied to have given to the district the means of getting the education which it wanted at the time. Any person who possessed intelligence enough to perceive the growing demand and to meet it, might have started a local school; and, as the population increased in numbers and wealth, he might have done some service; but he would have been soon absorbed into the growing system of national education. Ketler, however, along with sound practical sense, was always an idealist: he had in large measure the quality which I have often spoken of as the unconquerable idealism of America: the idealism is unconquerable because it is practical. He was always in front of and in some respects even far ahead of the national system, and could never be absorbed into it. The people felt that he stood forward, that he was in himself a force, that he

could not as yet be replaced by a system, and that he must and ought to be allowed free scope: the feeling was vague, but it was real and powerful. Through it grew the College which Ketler founded and directed.

It was the vigorous life of such small Colleges as the one he founded that specially attracted my interest. While I like old customs in the outward pomp and show of a University, I love the spirit and the bold initiative that ought to animate a true centre of education; and these I found abundantly in America. Not every experiment is a success; but the same free spirit that was ready to make the experiment is equally ready to discard it, when it has proved inadequate, to pluck victory out of the jaws of defeat by learning from failure, and to found future construction on the destruction of the inadequate and the incomplete.

We are too much inclined in British Universities to resent the introduction of anything new simply because it is new, and we habitually oppose experiment on the ground that, if once it has come to be practised, it becomes a fetter to restrain wiser development: hence every one fights against the new until he has become fully convinced that it must be entirely beneficial and free from any fault of incompleteness.

The fact, however, is and must always be that the new method is simply an experiment, incomplete and exotic and not entirely beneficial, but re-

quiring adaptation in details to the needs of each special University, and never fit to be transplanted into another University without some adaptation to its new soil, however vigorous it was in the old soil. In Scottish Universities especially the life of the reformer is a series of disappointments and battles, until at last he retires, sick of the very name of "University Reform".

III

Ketler started out as a young man with the ideal of a University, a democratic University, which he should create among his own people. He began as the teacher of a small village school; he had no money, no friends, no family connexion to aid him; yet he held this aim and this career before his mind from the beginning. He studied Greek with a view to his University. He refused other offers with this idea in his mind. He gave his work and risked his career for this apparently impossible ideal. Finally, in 1913, he postponed the operation, which it was hoped might save his life if performed instantly, until he had sketched out to others all details of his plans for the immediate work of the College.

He forced his scheme on others from the beginning. No other person was so crazy as to imagine that a College and ultimately a University could be made in the small village where he settled, uninvited and without encouragement. He made his

friends as time passed, because they saw what he was doing and trying; but at first he had to compel people to accept him and his high school, which opened in April, 1877, with thirteen pupils.

He dreamed of a University, yet his ideal was not in accordance with one marked tendency of modern American, and in general of modern European education. He believed in compulsory Greek; and during a period when the hold of Greek on the Universities of America and England was steadily growing weaker, he resolutely persisted in working for a University in which no student should get an Arts degree without spending at least one year in the study of Greek.

You cannot give or get much Greek in a year; and hence some people despise this moderate requirement of knowledge. The student gets so little that it is of no use to him, as they say; and they maintain that a pupil should either get more or none. But Ketler knew that a little is sometimes great. Even the vague perception and belief that ancient Greece lives as an imperishable influence on modern life, a feeling which can be acquired in a year, seemed to him an ennobling and invigorating influence on the character of every young man and woman. This was what he had himself. He knew its value in his life, and he was resolved that in his College every one should have the opportunity of acquiring the same knowledge and belief. Not every one can acquire it. There are natures

too poor, and soils too thin, to nourish such an idea. But the University that he imagined insists that every one who aims at a degree in letters shall go through the preliminary process, and that the soil shall be at least prepared to receive the seed. If the seed does not flourish, there are other plants that will suit the soil better.

The University of Berlin did not despise the beginnings of Greek education, when it instituted some years ago classes for beginners in Greek within its *pomoerium;* and the University of Aberdeen, when forming a similar class to teach the elements of Greek, could appeal to that example. Ketler from the first was possessed by the same educational thought to which those European Universities gave expression many years later.

IV

To found this University he went to a village of 200 inhabitants, called Pine Grove, in Western Pennsylvania, his native region. No one invited him to go there. No one promised him any help or any salary. He had to furnish the schoolroom with blackboard and all equipment at his own expense. At the first start no child entered from Pine Grove village. The village was not in a rich district. There were no industries, and no prospect of any industries in it. There was no sign of early or quick development in the little village. There was nothing to induce the ordinary man to try his fortune in it.

What prospect tempted Isaac Conrad Ketler to

aim at planting his University here? Even now, when the village has become a town of 4000 inhabitants, wearing the more ambitious name of Grove City, it is not easy to find an answer to the question. But he believed in the development and the future of Pine Grove, and here he pitched his University of the future, and his humble high school in an upper chamber of the present.

Perhaps it would not be wrong to conclude that what Ketler had faith in was his own country and his own people. The Pilgrim Fathers, New England, the whole United States, Pennsylvania—such was the development of ideas in his thought. Anywhere in Pennsylvania, on a railway line, was a suitable home for his University; and so he came back, after learning Greek at a school in Ohio, to the section of the country in which he felt himself most thoroughly at home. Here he was born, and here he got his first school training. Here he had come into early relations with Mr. J. N. Pew, a very remarkable personality, afterwards destined to be Chairman of the Board of Trustees and a munificent benefactor and constant friend of the College: I believe that Mr. Pew was his teacher at school. It was the country as a whole whose future Ketler believed in, and he picked out a village on a railway line a few miles from his childhood's home. Such is, perhaps, the explanation of his choice.

He began without any salary or promises or pupils from the village. He literally took his life

in his hand. The village did not know him or believe in him; but he came with a reputation that stood high in Scrub Grass. Scrub Grass was a village on the Allegheny River in the same section of the State of Pennsylvania; and Scrub Grass believed in Isaac Ketler. Scrub Grass had been paying him a salary of £16 a month,[1] and offered to increase this salary to £20 a month in order to retain the teacher in whom it had faith; but in vain. The young teacher saw that Scrub Grass was not on a railway, and could not develop into a University town. Pine Grove was situated on a railway, not indeed on an important line, only a freight line built to carry ore between the iron works near Pittsburg and the Great Lakes by way of Erie; the railway management disdained the humble receipts from passengers, especially those of the tiny hamlet of Pine Grove; but the law required that a certain amount of attention should be paid to the needs and the passengers of the country through which the freight was carried, and the railway obeyed the law. The passenger trains were often kept late in order to facilitate the more important class of trains; but still they ran; and Pine Grove with its University of the future, and its teacher's belief in Greek and in high educational ideals, profited by the slow "omnibus" trains.

[1] The school met only in the winter months, so that the salary was not so large as appears at first sight. In the summer Ketler went to a school in Ohio to learn Greek.

Pine Grove grew into Grove City. There was some coal not far away, and there was natural gas in the immediate neighbourhood; the houses are partly warmed by natural gas fires; and the chief industry now is a large factory for gas engines. But the gas is found only in small quantity, and is no longer so important as it once was. It is the College, not the natural product, which gives the place its standing in the United States. Ketler interested a number of the inhabitants in the high school, and a small company was formed to develop it. In course of time all the shareholders, without a single exception, handed over their property to a body of Trustees of the new College, which was incorporated by Charter from the State.

Such in brief was the process by which the little school with thirteen pupils in an upper chamber grew into the College of Grove City. It might be difficult, yet undoubtedly it would be possible, to find on our side of the water a body of shareholders willing to give up their property in a growing concern; but it would be impossible to find the conditions of rapid growth over the entire country that have marked this part of Western Pennsylvania, where the population has increased two and a half times over since Ketler's school was founded. With this increase the value of property has grown, and the need for higher education has been felt more and more keenly. To take one example of the growth in values. A favourable opportunity

presented itself to acquire a piece of land across the stream from Grove City for 600 dollars; and Ketler found five men to join him in the purchase, each putting up 100 dollars. Later he induced them all to present their shares with him to the College; and the property is now valued at 20,000 dollars. We cannot do this in Europe, except close to a great city.

The development of Pine Grove stimulated the people to abandon their old name for the more pretentious title of Grove City. This was hard for Ketler to bear. He opposed it to the last, and staked his influence and popularity on resistance; the change savoured to him of pretentiousness; but it pleased the people and general feeling was too strong for him. Even in the sketch of the growth of the College, which is prefixed to the widely circulated annual account of the Classes and Constitution, there lingers a memory of the struggle over the name in an expression of doubt regarding the wisdom of the change.

V

To us on the East side of the Atlantic, who have heard a little by vague and not always trustworthy report about the organization of American Universities, the President of the University is a figure of special interest. I call the reports in this case untrustworthy, because they come from University men, and there are few "stories" that are so

much worked up as those current in University circles. There are no people who appreciate so well as University men the principle, that one should never spoil a story by injudicious adherence to exact truth in details. We know that the President in an American College has far more power in his hands than the head of an English or a Scottish University or College; partly, the constitution gives him more power, partly he is chosen as a man likely to use power actively. That is not the case with us. Every one knows that the tendency with us is very strong to seek for a safe man, one who will not set the Thames on fire, one who is not too energetic or too clever, one who will "let well alone" and not try experiments.

I have heard a scholar, a distinguished Professor in an English University, maintain that the main business of American College Presidents is to raise money, and that processions through the streets were a marked feature of University life as the chief means of stimulating public interest and gaining support. My own experience has been different. I have never seen a University procession outside the campus of the University in America, and very rarely inside the campus: but I have seen a score on the European side of the Atlantic. The want of ceremonial is a marked feature of American University life; and only in a few places does anyone care enough for it to attempt to create some Academic custom. Dr.

Ketler had a certain idea of University ceremony, and a wish to encourage it; he did not carry his idea and wish far; but he had at heart, as I thought, the vague hope of creating some of the outward pomp of University life. Created ceremonial, however, falls easily into the error of being hollow and unconvincing.[1]

He was a creative President, for he made a College out of nothing: in the creative President you have the most typical characteristics of the University President in America; and some sketch of the personal qualities of such a man, as they strike an observer from the European side, will best exemplify the qualities that work successfully in that position.

His career is a proof (if any were needed) that the quality most needed in a College President is not the talent for pleasing everybody and attaining general popularity. He had his own conceptions of right, and when he had made up his mind, nothing could alter his resolve. He faced unpopularity on several occasions, and he never yielded a hair's breadth. His students more than once disapproved of the severity of his discipline.

[1] In a new University the ceremony should not be imitative, but imaginative. It should embody the spirit of the country and the new age. I saw a striking ceremony, absolutely novel, and yet impressive, useful and dignified, at the University of Illinois. Also at Bryn Mawr College I admired a very pretty and effective piece of ceremonial.

The press once at least sided with them, and criticized the President's action severely; but he was immovable. He sent down a whole class, and the newspapers accused him of turning out women homeless in the winter. On another occasion almost the whole body of students took the part of one who had been sent down; and a petition was extensively signed protesting against the punishment as excessive, and it was understood that all who signed it pledged themselves to leave the College, if the punishment was not relaxed. This came to Dr. Ketler's knowledge, and at the close of morning prayers, when all students were assembled, he announced that he had heard of this document, and that if it came before him, every one whose name was signed on it would be sent down. He added that he had begun the College with thirteen students, and, if necessary, he was prepared to make a fresh start with the same small number. The petition was never presented. The dauntless courage of the man challenged and won the admiration of the students, and whom they admired they respected and followed.

It was his courage that carried him through every difficulty. He was a strong man, absolutely devoid of fear, and winning the respect ultimately of almost every opponent. That is the quality that is essential to the making of a great College President. It is necessary for the President to raise large sums of money in order to develop the

College; but in America money is not given for suavity and pleasant manners. Money is given to the man who creates the impression of strength and steadfast purpose and organizing power. Suavity and outward courtesy may be useful as additions, but they are not the essentials.

Dr. Ketler was a man of strong religious feeling; but his religion was of his own heart and intellect. It was far more intellectual than emotional; and he had a certain distrust, and almost a dislike, for methods of religious influence which appealed too much to the emotions. On one occasion, a good many years ago, he would do nothing to support an itinerant evangelist who came to the town. He distrusted the man's sincerity; and, as the story was told me, his instinct was afterwards proved to be right. At the moment, however, his aloofness was blamed, and for a time he was the object of severe criticism.

Such attacks and occasional moments of unpopularity in his own city among valued friends wounded him. He felt the situation keenly; but he made no outward sign. He continued on his own way apparently unmoved; and the steadfastness and confidence of his course impressed the public, and opinion in the long run rallied to his cause in almost everything except as regards the name of Grove City. The education that he aimed at for America, the education which alone could in his opinion make the America that he

loved, was religious; and this he sought to exemplify in his own College.

He knew that it must be the main business of a University to make American citizens, and not savants or great scholars. He would have loved to send forth from the College some really great and epoch-making scholar; he had a certain half-German, half-Scottish, ideal of this kind; but for this he would not sacrifice—even if it would have done any good to sacrifice—the immediate work of making men fit for the American world, and likely to leave the American world a little better than they found it. He was an idealist and a practical man combined; and this combination was the source of his strength.

With the people whose knowledge or abilities or personal power of character he respected, he was modest almost to a fault; he was absolutely devoid of affectation or conceit; but he was very sharp with those who pretended to have knowledge. He had no patience with affectation, or self-assertiveness, or bumptiousness, unless perhaps there was an extraordinary amount of knowledge or power behind the superficial appearance. He was quick as lightning in detecting the weak point of an adversary, and incisive in pouncing on it. Many of the stories that were told about him turned on this, usually showing him championing some friend or maintaining his own ideal of American life or University behaviour. He was seen at his best in

a sudden emergency, and when acting for some person placed under his charge. He saw instantaneously where to strike, and he struck fearlessly and hard.

No person ever had a deeper reverence for true knowledge than Ketler. It was almost a religion with him to respect knowledge. Paul's description of "the new man which is renewed in knowledge" expressed his ideal of University life. It was for this ideal that he lived and worked and died. "The treasures of wisdom and knowledge"[1] were what he longed for, and wished to impart to his students, because in that process lay the future of America. His patriotism was ardent. His love for and pride in the United States were a burning fire in his heart. Yet he was never aggressive in his outward display of patriotism. He respected other people, because he had the true respect for his own. He respected America for what it is, but much more for what it might and must become. He liked to study other countries and to have round him at the College men who knew foreign states; but his object was to adapt to American ends the results of his study and experience. He had the most fervent and confident faith in the future of the United States, provided that the Colleges and Universities do their work.

[1] Colossians II. 3; III. 10.

VI

Dr. Ketler was far from the error of trying to force his ideal on an unwilling world. He knew well, as has been stated above, that he had to adapt his College to the needs of the moment and to the opportunities of the people. He knew that he must begin on a humble level, and work up to a higher standard. He must take the material at hand, and do the best for it that was consistent with the time and the means at his disposal. As one of the staff said to me, the standard was distinctly higher in 1913 than in 1906, and it would be correspondingly higher in 1920 than in 1913. Ketler did not make the mistake that was made in Scotland by the last Royal Commission: he did not create a gulf between the College and the schools by fixing his requirements too high: he would not, as has been done in Scotland, exclude a really deserving and valuable class, which desired to come.

I am not going to exemplify this by setting forth a mass of instructional details. I will take only two examples of a bold method of dealing with two difficult problems of practical needs in respect of teachers and clergy.

One of the most important aspects of University work in America is to raise the standard of knowledge and method among school teachers. The teachers, who make the material for the Universities in the future, will themselves share in the

raising of the standard. Thirty years of University development will do much for them. But why not help the teachers of the present moment? Ketler had been a village schoolmaster himself, and had used his five months' summer vacation to go to school in Ohio, and study Greek and other things. Perhaps his own experience suggested the plan that he adopted.

He used the autumn vacation term, and arranged a six weeks' course of lectures for teachers. The same teachers come, if they choose, for several years; but no amount of repetition of the courses qualifies for a degree. The teachers come to learn; and the learning is their reward. They do their school work better, and thus their career is advanced, probably, in many cases. I met a number of them in 1913, and was impressed with the lofty standard of aims and thought among them. They were people of a high class. Naturally it would be the best type of teachers who devoted so much of their summer vacation to study and self-improvement.

Another purpose which Dr. Ketler had much at heart was the advancement of the standard of education among the clergy. A highly educated ministry was, in his estimation, among the greatest needs in American life. A University degree was useful for this purpose. Not merely should the minister be educated: he should be known and marked as an educated man. Accordingly, Ketler

devised something like the old Oxford ten-year-system,[1] whereby a course of attendance for ten summer terms qualified for a degree. In Grove City College a number of ministers and business men attended for the autumn term, and thus gradually worked out their degree. Among them I met in 1910 and 1913 a mining engineer from Arizona, who was thus spending the summers regularly at the College year after year, going back to business for nine months out of the twelve. While I do not maintain or believe that the great and old Universities ought to institute similar devices to help imperfection, I feel strongly that it is most beneficial for the country that such opportunities should exist; and the individual case which I have mentioned confirmed my opinion.

This zeal for an educated ministry suggested to Ketler another device. He instituted the Bible Conference, which is similar in character to several "Summer Schools" that have been held in Great Britain. The Conference has met for ten days in the beginning of August during many years past. More than any other feature of the College, it has spread the fame of Grove City in the United States. Many other similar meetings of a religious character are held in America. This one stands out as in-

[1] This system was abolished in Oxford about fifty years ago; but something can be said in its favour. Allowance should be made for incomplete devices in the education of imperfect human beings.

tellectually on a higher level, while the rest are more of the Camp Meeting order, excellent in themselves but aiming more at edification. Ketler gathered to these Conferences quite a remarkable set of men, lecturing on subjects in which they were acknowledged to be masters, and constituting for the time a society of very high intellectual order, which was educative to the College and the town.

The organization of the Conference kept him busy. It was his pet scheme; and it was the means of attracting to Grove City as lecturers and as hearers many who otherwise would never have heard of the town. He was planning for years in advance how to attract to the Conference preachers from Britain, who learned of Grove City and of Dr. Ketler first from the invitation which he sent. He was, of course, sometimes unsuccessful, for he sought out preachers of high reputation, whom he had himself usually listened to and passed in judgment.

A Conference like this could not pay expenses. People will not go in thousands to a Conference whose intellectual level was so high, as they will to the more emotional type of meeting. The annual deficit was paid by the Chairman of the Trustees of the College, Mr. Pew, and by Mr. S. P. Harbison of Pittsburg, also a Trustee.

The tragically sudden death of the former in 1912 was a great blow to Dr. Ketler. The sole

penalty of growing old is that friends drop away one by one. Mr. Pew was a successful rival of the Standard Oil Company, whom that great corporation could neither buy nor break. It needed great intellectual power and great tenacity of purpose to make a business against the Standard Oil Company, and great financial and moral power to maintain it. Probably his grasp of the practical side of life, and his sense of the importance of picking up knowledge on all sides, did much to make Dr. Ketler practical in his aims.

The University of Grove City is still in the future. Dr. Ketler died before he had realized his dream, and he left his ambition incompletely achieved. Yet in the last two years of his life he could feel that the pioneering stage was finished, and that he was just entering a new stage of fruition; and he spoke and wrote with confident anticipation of the work that lay before the College in the immediate future. But he left a College with a considerable, though far from a sufficient, endowment, with between 400 and 500 students, and above all with its own individuality and reputation—a College for workers, not for boys who want amusement, a College for students who go there to work because the atmosphere is of work, and who have fully realized that their life and career depend on themselves.

The most critical stage, perhaps, in the history of such a College comes when the faith and the

hand of the founder are withdrawn. It was the faith of the founder in his own idea that laid every stone of the growing College in its place. His successor is the man whom he himself probably would have chosen, if he had ventured to hope that the invitation would be accepted, a man who has the same ideal of a democratic University that Ketler cherished, and who possesses knowledge such as Ketler used to admire and a high standing in the University world. He has to show that he possesses the faith in his ideal, and the activity and single-mindedness needed to carry it out.

VII

Ketler was racially an interesting specimen of the American citizen. Racial problems are always fascinating, and he exemplified the solution of a great problem of national assimilation. As the name Conrad Ketler shows, he was of pure German descent; but he was American for two generations.

Yet, born as he was and brought up in Western Pennsylvania where the Scottish and Scottish-Irish element is so strong, he was a Presbyterian of the Scottish type, having a strong sympathy with and a true admiration for the best qualities of the British people. The side of his character which is indicated by the name Conrad became secondary, though it was by no means unimportant. He was Isaac Ketler, who felt himself spiritually a descendant of the Puritans of New England and the Quakers

of Pennsylvania, taking something from them, but never one of them. In heart and in the essential qualities of his nature he was a typical Pennsylvanian Presbyterian. In his narrative poem, "The Pilgrims," and especially in the lyrics incorporated in it, he expresses his philosophic conception of American history and his profound belief in the destiny of America under the guidance of an overruling Providence. The Puritan "Pilgrims" from England formed in his idea the basis of the United States, and dictated the tone of the nation's character and development. The Scottish element and the German element were of immense importance in widening and strengthening that character; other elements co-operated; but the Pilgrims, coming to America as their own destined "holy place," are the true "Fathers" of the State.[1] The poem possesses real merit as an Epic of his country. It is the ideal view, which was natural to the German Conrad Ketler, and yet it glorifies the English part in the creation of

[1] I can imagine what Ketler would have felt, if it had been suggested to him that the German element in the United States is more German than American. He would have said forthwith, with his unerring instinct for the truth, that the mass of the Germans in the States are true Americans, and that the Germanophil agitation of 1914-5 is largely artificial, created by a group of capitalists for financial purposes and selfish ends of various other kinds, but not springing from the American mind or inspired by care for America.

America, not the Scottish, or the German, or the Irish.

He had seen much of Great Britain, and he had been a frequent "sermon-taster" in Scotland and England, and took much trouble to induce preachers and scholars in whom he believed to visit Grove City and help him there. As he could not offer them sufficient inducement in his own place to compensate for the long journey and the loss of time, he aimed at enlarging the recompense by forming engagements for them in other Universities and cities; and as regards this matter, it is advisable to mention—as the practice there is said to be sometimes different—that he took no percentage on the engagements which he thus made for those who came over at his invitation. The one reward which he sought was their presence at his own College; and for this service he paid on a regular business arrangement.

To his great regret he never found time to learn German, though he could make the time and opportunity to learn Greek after he had already spent some years and saved a few dollars as a village teacher. A University could be founded by a man who did not know German; he could employ others to teach that language; but the University of his dream could not be founded by a man who did not know enough of Greek to love it and to appreciate what it means to the world. The judgment implied is significant.

VIII

What was the ideal that we had in common, if I rightly understood him? It is that the University is the image of democracy, and the true democracy means an educated people. In the University every man is valued for what he can do, and what he is. Each is gauged at his true measurement, and employed accordingly. There is profound inequality in a University, as there is in human nature. Wherever the bald principle of "one man one vote" is admitted in a University, there you find that the weakness and the aimlessness of University work is centred. Wherever the single man is set to do the suitable piece of work, as in the lecture-room or in the department where the head professor co-ordinates the work of his subordinates, there you have the strength of University life. The University, then, is the true democratic government "writ small". The democracy is the University widened to the size of the nation and the infinite complexity of modern life, where each man gets full opportunity to do the work that he is best fitted for.

In the United States the breadth of what one may call the educated middle class, in which lies the strength of a country, seemed to be very wide, much wider than in Great Britain. Most European tourists, who are in America for a short visit of a few months, see very little of the small towns in which American life appears at its best.

The desire for education is deep-rooted and widely spread; and a great variety of educational means and methods exist there, which could not exist among us. It is frankly recognized there that there are many who cannot get a University training; and other less ambitious and less instructive courses are provided for them. Those who cannot get the best may take the second-best, or the third. With us Pope's principle rules, that "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing".

An honours degree, or nothing: so some people in the Universities would present the alternative. I see that in London University it is now seriously proposed to do away with the examinations for external candidates, the one way by which many eager and enterprising students have been able to get some University standing, when a University life was out of their power. In the same spirit forty or fifty years ago, many men in Oxford and Cambridge objected to the foundation of provincial Universities in England, lest the standard should be lowered and the influx of students to the older Universities stopped.

Every means of education should be encouraged. A little knowledge is better in the long run than none. It may lead to some affectation in individual cases; but affectation is not unknown in the oldest Universities, though it takes slightly different forms. People sometimes may fancy, after learning a little, that they are qualified scholars on the level of the

highest scholarship; but they are few, while the general level of thought and taste and aspirations is raised; and the Universities profit in the long run. The children of those who have gained for themselves a little advance in education are all the more likely to go to some of the many existing Universities.

The American University system resembles the old Scottish system much more than the English. As I knew Aberdeen between 1865 and 1870 it had several features that still flourish in America: students went intending to pass together through the course as one single continuous class and take the degree together, and many students were looking forward to a business or a medical career, but were taking the Arts degree in preparation. These characteristics are now almost destroyed in Scotland by the last Royal Commission; though the students still cling to the class system in Aberdeen despite all the force of law and ordinance and the chaos in studies. The Arts student going forward to a mercantile life has now practically disappeared with the increased demands made on undergraduates. Both these features still mark American University life. The class system is now universal, except in the University of Virginia (as I was told); but it is not original. It was introduced by William Smith, an Aberdeen student, who was first Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, and it spread from Philadelphia. Smith was

ejected from the Provostship by the Revolutionary Government, as he and the University were suspected of being unfavourable to the new order; but he was, I think, afterwards restored.

I am not, however, speaking of Universities alone, but of every form of educational institution from the village school to the greatest Universities, and including such creations as the delightful Museum of Indian Antiquities at the State University of Ohio, or the magnificent Carnegie Museum in Pittsburg. Nor do I imply that the American system is free from faults. The question is simply whether its character, with or in spite of faults, does not partly account for the fervent belief in and desire for education, which is so striking a feature in all parts of America that I have seen.

It was not difficult to see defects in the Colleges of America. One who was accustomed to the European Universities and the system of the ancient civilization could not help noticing differences; and many, who are used to the old things, are only too apt to imagine that every point of difference is a sign of inferiority in the American system. They cannot so readily detect that some of these differences are the natural and healthy outcome of the national idiosyncrasy and the special conditions, while others are merely the signs of youth and the opportunities of growth. Those defects are the things on which the directors of University development have their eyes fixed; and to remedy

the defects, while preserving the distinctive character, is the object of their strategy.

IX

Universities exist for the benefit, not only of the many, but also of the few eminent intellects in letters and science. What could the ideal of Isaac Ketler do for the few who are suited to profit by the most advanced studies?

As regards public education there is a notable difference between opinion in Britain and in the United States. In the States there exists an almost universal feeling that education should be spread widely, that as many as possible of the people even in the poorest stratum of society should be enabled to get the best education, and that money should be spent freely in broadening the range and improving the character of the education offered. State money is given on a vast scale, and private benefactions are colossal. The necessary expense of University life is cut down to a minimum; feeling runs strong in favour of men who are maintaining themselves at College by paid work in term or in vacation; and much is done to make their path easier and put in their way work that will help them to struggle through. On the other hand scholarships given by open competition as the reward of outstanding ability are not a feature of American as they are of English and Scottish Universities; in practice these tend among us to fall

to the lot of clever, not of poor men. In America a few entrance scholarships exist, but the system has little influence. The purpose is served in other ways.

In Britain there are, of course, many who cherish similar opinions; but they are only a small minority of the people, while the overwhelming majority either are indifferent, or openly declare that education should be confined to the few, that higher education is bad for the working classes and not good for business men, and that it is responsible for the spread of socialism, syndicalism, anarchical vague theorizing and practical uselessness in Britain, and for the unrest in India. Mr. Carnegie's munificent attempt to throw the Scottish Universities open to all Scots that can pass the entrance examination, has been widely blamed as pauperizing Scotland: it was stigmatized at the outset as misapplied, and now the results are declared to be bad, although the comdemnation is not supported by any proper investigation of the effect produced, still less by any proof that any ill effects are not caused by bad use of a benefaction which might be more beneficial if it were employed in a more sensible way.

The difference of opinion is impressive; and the question arises how far it is caused by difference in the aims and character of the education supplied in the two countries. It would be easy for me to state my own opinion, the result of three visits spent almost entirely at educational institutions, but individual views are liable to be, and to be

regarded as, subjective and capricious, and I prefer to take this special case, one which is at once an average and an extreme case, bringing to a focus the general tendencies in American education; and to find in it the suggestion of an answer to the question.

For the sake of clearness I premise—what may be said confidently without fear of contradiction—that the general line of difference between the two systems of education lies in this: the ideal of American education is to be serviceable in the average world, and to produce an ordinary useful man in some line of practical life: the tendency with us is to sacrifice the average commonplace schoolboy and University man to the able few, to regard the many as subservient to the exceptional cases, and to foster special abilities to an extreme along certain fixed lines, often setting a high artificial value on qualities which can easily result in producing cranks. The examination system, to which we in Britain are enslaved, sometimes gives the highest honours to men who prove useless and become a positive terror to every one.

American Universities, as may safely be said, stand closer to the national life than the British, where a disinclination to live in the life of the nation is felt and expressed by many.[1] American

[1] I am not unmindful of the influence exerted by Oxford on English public life; one college supplied nine Prime Ministers during the nineteenth century; but those are the men that did not spend their life at college.

education is more practical, English more abstract, i.e. the intention with us is very widely declared to be the production, not of men able to be forthwith useful in some special line of activity, but of men who know how to learn to become useful in any and every line of activity. In America education tends to be based on imparting to every pupil a rough and not always intelligent familiarity with the facts of applied science, while in England it is based far more on literary training. In the American system, so far as I could judge, they start by imparting scientific conceptions, and build up on this basis a certain degree, more or less, of literary education. Among us in Great Britain, on the other hand, they begin by laying a literary foundation, build up on this a literary superstructure with some slight mathematical admixture, and finally impart scientific training to a few.

Even in the department of the applied sciences American method is less abstract than English, preferring to give to the many some elementary acquaintance with results and superficial processes, all that the ordinary man is fit to understand and apply, while we in Britain despise this as shoddy and aim at a far more thorough training of the few. I shall, however, speak only of the department of literature and ancient history, in which my life has been spent.

In America they do not ignore the needs of the few exceptional students; but for this class they provide through the development of "post-graduate

study" (horrid title!) on the lines initiated at Baltimore and now widely followed (notably in a recent magnificent institution at Princeton). Still the want of a real Honours school is, undoubtedly, disappointing to us when we visit America; and those of us who are habituated to the results of the Honours work at home feel the want of corresponding features in America. In the Universities I met many men of great ability, fine education, high ideals, men devoted to research and thought, men whom it was a delight to meet and to hold converse with (for me, whose whole life from eighteen has been turned towards research); but the pure love of literature and delight in it for its own sake, apart from any results or discovery or research, is distinctly more frequent in the English than in the American Universities. There are examples of it that I remember well in the latter; but they are exceptional. The philosophic training and outlook, or the philological, are more characteristic of American education than the simply and purely literary.

The general preference for a German rather than an English (or even a French) continuation of University life intensifies this tendency. German higher work superinduced on the American system of elementary training would generally produce less educative effect on students that I met than an English University course.[1]

[1] This and the next three paragraphs are a résumé of a speech, which was demanded from me at an American University in

A judicious combination of French and English University life would, as I believe, be far more suited to put the crown on the American type of education in ancient literature than the German. In Germany the organization of research is the most noteworthy feature; and this makes it enormously important for young British scholars to gain some experience in Germany, because in Britain organization is so utterly neglected that the very idea of it is non-existent among us and the possibility of it is widely denied, or disbelieved without denial. In America, however, a scientific conception of the nature and value of organization is almost universal; and to send American scholars to Germany induces the danger of overestimating the importance of organization, and undervaluing the individual judgment and power.[1] In saying this I do not wish to

November, 1913. Speaking late at night without previous warning, I doubtless did not deserve to please my audience (which was largely German, as I heard afterwards), and certainly did not succeed in doing so.

[1] In 1915 I add that history has just supplied the confirmation of this estimate of the strength and the weakness of the German training in another department, as neglecting the perfecting of the individual. That most marvellous creation of national work, the German army, justly lauded by the Germans for many years as the most perfect military instrument ever invented, has been in practice employed by a body of highly trained, hard-working, zealous, and devoted Staff officers without any intelligent plan, and wasted in the employment. They were men wholly without genius, but excellent parts of an excellent machine—without a General at the head.

detract from the truth that the most noteworthy feature of the last forty years in University life has been the eminent work of the German intellect in those branches of research which interest me most.

In Britain we work empirically rather than scientifically. The only principle that I have ever been able to see underlying our administration in general is to find out what a man can do well, and set him to do something else. That gradually produces a very widely and well-trained individual; but somebody suffers while he is acquiring experience in one department after another, and he is not equally suited for every line of work, while he is often promoted out of the line in which he is valuable into one where he has to start at the beginning. But on all sides of human activity you do find in Britain an individual standard of capability—often denied by the State all opportunity of usefulness in its best line of work—such as distinctly surpasses the German standard; and the reason lies largely in the German system of sacrificing the individual to the machine. The great men who constructed the German machine leave as successors only those who have learned to use it in the same way as their teachers used it; but limitless development is the law of excellence for the machine of research in letters or in history.

The men, and the individual initiative, ought to make the system; but in Germany it is the system that moulds the man. A State-made system, as in

Germany, is dangerous, because it tends to fetter the new age by the ideas of the previous generation. As yet the fettering is only moral, but soon it will be felt intellectually also.

Efficiency, certainly, is the supreme merit of the German system. It levels up to the standard of the best, and weeds out the incapable remorselessly. This merit, however, has no educative quality for us: one need not go to Germany to learn that effectiveness is of the highest value. In Britain our education is rendered less efficient, because we tend to level down to the standard of the less capable from humanitarian reasons: the best are not encouraged to do their best and to learn the most possible, lest the weak suffer in the attempt to come up to the same standard. While we should not imitate the remorseless treatment of the weak in German education, it is not wise or necessary to level down to the standard of the less capable.[1]

As to France, it is a work of supererogation to praise the grace, and the sense of form, of beauty and dignity, which make some experience of French work so useful to an American scholar and to all scholars. In November, 1913, I heard a distinguished Princeton scholar state this well.

Yet why not have American training alone? Why should not the American Universities supply everything themselves without sending pupils to

[1] So in industry the law of the Trades Union is to level down to the lowest standard.

other countries? In the first place, such wider experience in the literary training of other lands is every whit as important at present for the young German, or Briton, or Frenchman, as for the young American; and the lack of it in Germany, and the total insensitiveness there to the need of it, is devitalizing the German organization in literary and historical research. The German mind is feeding on itself alone, and there is not enough of sustenance in this to keep it human. In the second place, it is of the essence of literary training that it cannot attain its highest level without becoming world-wide in its outlook; and the remarkable fact is that the more it learns from the outer world, and the more it absorbs from foreign education, and the more it comprehends and loves other nations, the more intensely national (and, in the present case, American) it becomes. Nationalism without appreciation of what the foreigner can give becomes narrow and Chauvinistic, and ends in praising itself and despising everything else; while nationalism that appreciates and admires the excellences of the foreigner is raised to its own highest power and burns with its own purest and brightest flame.

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